

Committee Scope

The committee is concerned with the institutional relationships and interactive processes associated with metropolitan transportation planning and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), and the aspects of those relationships and processes that influence MPO effectiveness. The committee will examine the evolving role and planning processes of MPOs, including, but not necessarily limited to, goal-setting, long-range planning, project identification and selection, and system management and operation. The roles and impact of federal, state, and local governments, quasi-governmental agencies, State DOTs, public transit providers, private organizations, citizen groups, and emerging regional initiatives in the metropolitan transportation planning process are also integral parts of the committee's scope.

Committee Goals

1. Promote research, facilitate discussion, and disseminate information on the evolving role of MPOs, planning processes, and transportation decision-making in metropolitan areas.
2. Promote research, facilitate discussion, and disseminate information on the roles and impact of federal, state, and local governments, transportation agencies, and other parties involved or interested in the metropolitan transportation planning process.
3. Promote research, facilitate discussion, and disseminate information on the impact and/or importance of transportation, public policy, and public administration trends on the metropolitan transportation planning process and MPOs.
4. Promote research, facilitate discussion, and disseminate information on analytical tools and approaches for supporting improved MPO decision-making and processes, including problem identification and best practices.
5. Promote and facilitate improved understanding of and broader participation in MPO activities.
6. Improve decision-making at the MPO level by encouraging coordination and cooperation between the TRB committees concerned with the metropolitan transportation planning process.

Strategic Plan
Committee A1A03: Metropolitan Policy, Planning, and Processes

Strategies

1. Solicit and review papers on MPO and metropolitan transportation planning processes for TRB publication and presentation.
2. Sponsor research statements and/or help obtain funding for research on issues of importance to MPOs and metropolitan transportation planning.
3. Communicate widely the research findings, best practices, ongoing research, and related information on MPOs and metropolitan transportation planning processes by using a broad range of information dissemination channels and peer exchanges.
4. Create and sponsor TRB sessions on MPOs and metropolitan transportation planning processes at annual and mid-year TRB meetings and actively seek to co-sponsor sessions on related topics.
5. Sponsor or actively participate in workshops, training, and other special events that support attainment of the Metropolitan Policy, Planning, and Process Committee's scope and goals, and develop circulars and other products from these events for dissemination.

Action Steps

Strategy 1 – Solicit and review papers for TRB publication and presentation on the following topics:

- For 2004, conduct a call for papers on the following topics:
 - STP Sub-allocation – road/transit flex theory vs. reality
 - What Makes a Region? Future Definitions of MPOs
- For 2005, conduct a call for papers on the following topics:
 - Security Planning: MPOs in Post 9/11 Environment
 - Project prioritization
- Research on effectiveness of “vision planning” in fiscally-constrained environment (fiscal vision also).
- The connectivity (or lack thereof) between Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs) and Transportation Improvement Plans (TIPs)

Strategy 2 – Sponsor research statements/get research funded for the following activities:

- Sponsor research on integration of system management and operations (M&O) role with traditional MPO planning role

Strategy 3 – Communicate research findings, ongoing research, research needs, and best practices

Strategic Plan
Committee A1A03: Metropolitan Policy, Planning, and Processes

- Sponsor an MPO Practitioner Peer Exchange in May 2003 in cooperation with the TRB Statewide Planning Conference
- Establish and implement a strategy for identifying problems and best practices (e.g., synthesis reports)
- Assist USDOT and TRB in identifying the professional capacity-building needs of new MPOs
- Improve liaison activities with other key committees (focus of summer meeting), including surveying current A1A03 members regarding their memberships and/or participation in other TRB committees

Strategy 4: Sponsor/co-sponsor TRB sessions on MPOs and metropolitan planning processes

- Sponsor at least 2 sessions at the 2004 Annual TRB Meeting, including an annual session on MPO 'best practices'

Strategy 5: Sponsor/participate in workshops, training, and other special events that support attainment of the Committee's scope and goals.

- Sponsor an afternoon or breakfast w/MPOs at the April Applications Conference

Other

- Conduct research on the state of the practice and innovations in investment decision-making in metropolitan areas (e.g., inter-jurisdictional negotiated decision-making, etc.).